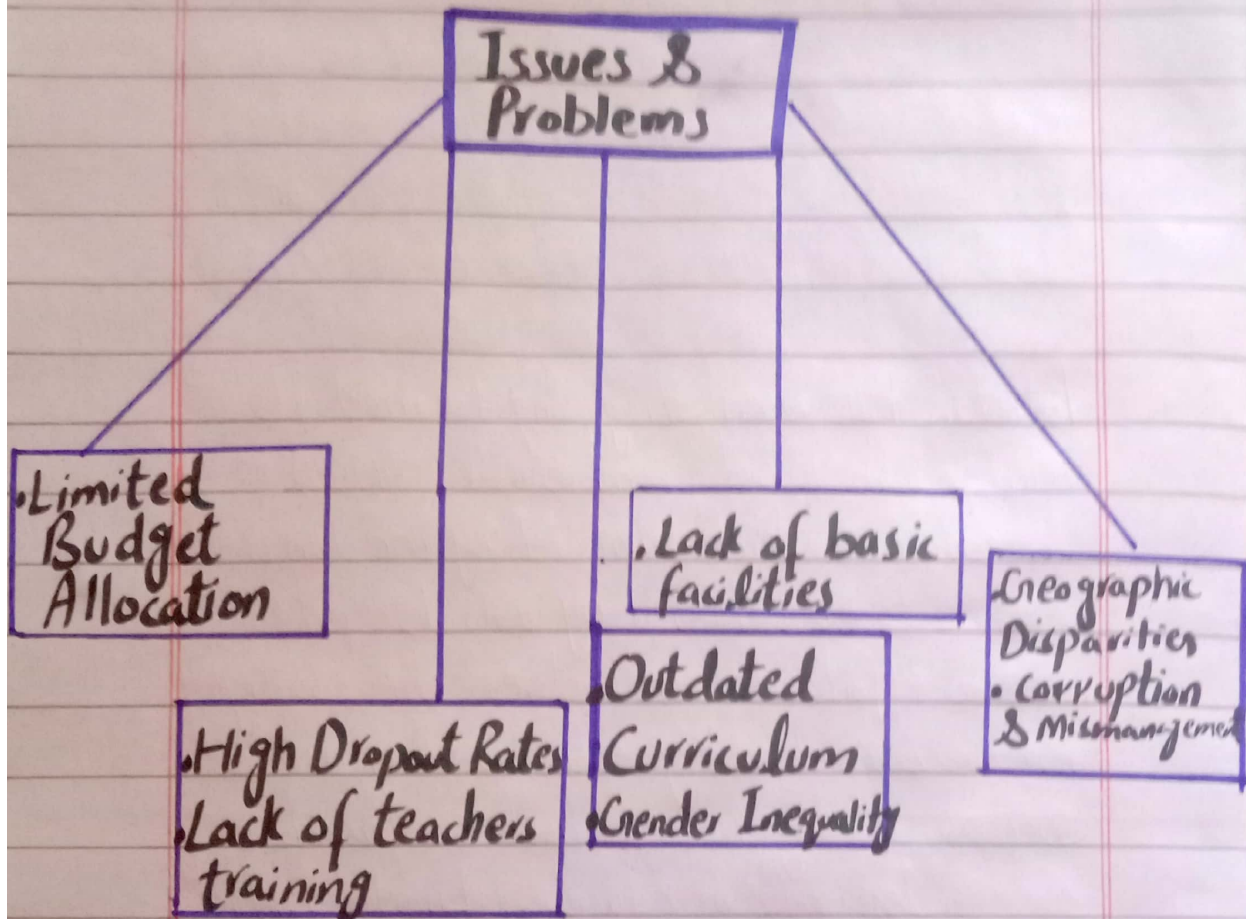


Pakistan's lagging behind in achieving its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education. Explain the issues and problems it is facing and recommend workable solutions to achieve these goals.

## 1. Introduction:

Pakistan has been struggling to meet its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education, which were set by the United Nations to be achieved by 2015. Despite various efforts and initiatives, the country remains behind in key educational indicators such as literacy rates, school enrollment and gender parity in education. Limited budget allocation, outdated curriculum, lack of teacher training, high dropout rates, inadequate infrastructure and corruption and mismanagement are some of the core issues hindering progress. This analysis delves into specific challenges faced by Pakistan in its education sector, offers critical insights into the underlying problems, and proposes actionable solutions to address these obstacles.

## 2. Issues and Problems face Pakistan to achieve its MDGs for education:



### i) Limited Budget Allocation:

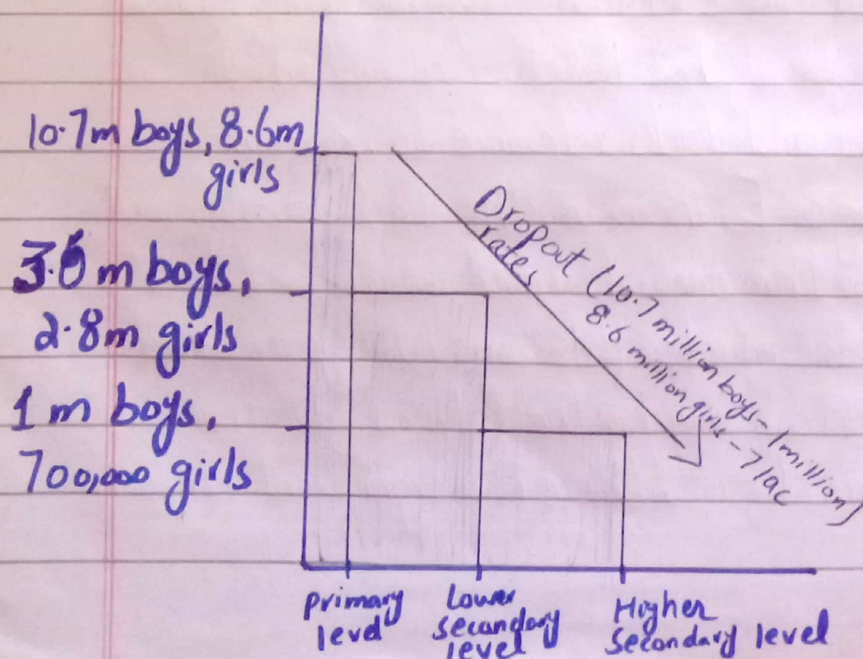
Limited budget allocation is a major problem for Pakistan in meeting the MDGs for education. The country spends only 2.8% of its GDP on education, significantly lower than the UNESCO recommended 4-6%, according to UNESCO Institute for



**Statistics.** This underfunding results in inadequate school facilities, insufficient educational resources, lack access to quality education.

## ii) High Dropout Rates due to Poverty:-

Poverty significantly drives high dropout rates in Pakistan, with families unable to afford the costs associated with education. **According to UNESCO**, over 22.8 million children are out of school in Pakistan, with poverty cited as a primary cause. Nearly 10.7 million boys and 8.6 million girls are enrolled at the primary level and this drops to 3.6 million boys and 2.8 million girls at the lower secondary level.



### iii) **Lack of teachers training:-**

The lack of teachers training is a major problem for Pakistan's education system.

According to the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**, nearly 37% of teachers in rural Pakistan lack formal training.

This deficiency impacts educational quality and student engagement. **UNESCO** reports that only 55% of primary school teachers in Pakistan have received pre-service training.

Such figures highlight the urgent need for comprehensive teacher training programs to enhance institutional quality and retention rates.

### iv) **Outdated Curriculum:-**

Pakistan's outdated curriculum poses a significant obstacle to achieving the MDGs.

The National Education Assessment System (NEAS) found that Pakistan's curriculum is outdated and lacks relevance to modern challenges. Furthermore, the lack of alignment between the curriculum and international standards impedes Pakistan's ability to meet MDGs. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics Report, there is a significant disparity



between the curriculum taught in schools and the skills required for sustainable development.

### v) **Gender Inequality:-**

Gender inequality remains a major challenge in Pakistan's education system. According to WB 2023, about 2 million more girls than boys are out of school in Pakistan.

**UNICEF reports** that by grade six, 59% of girls are out of school, versus 49% of boys. Only 13% of girls are still in school by ninth grade. **The Pakistan**

**Gender Gap Report** highlights persistent disparities in educational attainment between genders, with cultural norms often prioritizing boys' education over girls'. Such inequalities perpetuate broader societal disparities and hinder progress towards gender equality.

### vi) **Lack of Access and Infrastructure:-**

The lack of access to schools is a major issue in education, and it is worsened by poor infrastructure, particularly affecting girls. About **76%** of children attending government schools

have to walk to school. Additionally, many government schools lack basic facilities: **49%** do not have electricity, **64%** do not have access to clean drinking water, **58%** do not have proper toilets, **55%** have inadequate buildings and **65%** do not have boundary walls. These factors of limited access and poor infrastructure contribute to the education crisis in Pakistan.

## vii) **Corruption and Mismanagement:**

Corruption and mismanagement in Pakistan's education sector are formidable obstacles to achieving the MDGs. According to **Transparency International Pakistan**, corruption is rampant in educational institutions, ranging from bribery for admissions to ghost teachers inflating payrolls. This hampers efforts to improve literacy rates, which stand at **59%**.

- Millennium Development Goals was set **88%** literacy rate for Pakistan but, unfortunately, due to these major problems, Pakistan reached only **59%** literacy rate.



### 3. Solutions to achieve Millennium Development Goals :-

#### i) Increase Funding and Efficient Use of Resources :-

Increasing funding and ensuring efficient use of resources are vital for improving education in Pakistan. Currently, Pakistan allocates only about 2.8% of its GDP to education. Boosting the education budget to at least 4% of GDP and implementing transparent management can significantly enhance access to and the quality of education.

#### ii) Enhance Access to Education :-

Enhancing access to education is crucial for Pakistan to achieve its educational goals. Building and upgrading school infrastructure, especially in rural and underserved areas, is essential. Introducing financial incentives for families to send their children to school. These programs provide monetary support to families contingent on their children's regular school attendance, which is particularly effective in encouraging education for girls and children from low-income households. Moreover, providing transport services

to children in remote areas. These measures can significantly increase educational access and help bridge the gap in educational disparities.

### iii) Improve Teacher Training and Quality:-

Currently, many teachers lack proper training, which significantly impacts the quality of education. According to the Article, "Pakistan's Education Crisis: Who is to Blame? (Dawn News), only about 35% of teachers have received professional training, leading to inadequate teaching methods and poor student performance. Investing in continuous professional development programs can equip teachers with modern teaching skills and techniques. Furthermore, introducing incentives such as higher salaries and career advancement opportunities for qualified teachers to work in rural and underserved areas can help bridge educational disparities. Enhanced teacher training will ensure a more effective learning environment, improve student outcomes, and contribute to Pakistan's progress towards its educational goals.



## iv) Curriculum Reforms :-

Curriculum reforms are essential to modernize education in Pakistan and align it with contemporary needs. Currently, the curriculum is often outdated, failing to prepare students for modern job markets and higher education. According to the Dawn News Article: "STEM Education in Pakistan", Reforming the curriculum to include critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy skills is crucial. Additionally, integrating vocational training and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education can make learning more relevant and practical. These reforms should also ensure that textbooks and teaching materials are updated regularly to reflect current knowledge and practices. By modernizing the curriculum, Pakistan can better equip its students with the skills necessary for the 21st century.

## v) Address Gender Inequality:-

Addressing gender inequality in education is critical for Pakistan to achieve its development goals. According to the article, "Pakistan's Literacy Challenges", the literacy rate for females is 48%;

significantly lower than the 70% for males.

Community engagement and awareness campaigns can help change perceptions about girls' 'from attending school' education, emphasizing its importance. Additionally, providing scholarships and financial incentives to families for educating their daughters can reduce dropout rates. These measures can significantly reduce gender disparities in education.

## vi) **Strengthen Governance and Accountability:-**

Strengthen governance and accountability in Pakistan's education sector is vital for improving its overall effectiveness and efficiency. Corruption and mismanagement are significant issues, leading to the misallocation of resources. Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems can ensure that funds are used appropriately and that educational policies are effectively implemented. Moreover, establishing transparent procedures for resource distribution and school management can reduce corruption and enhance trust.



#### 4. Conclusion:-

In conclusion, Pakistan faces significant challenges in achieving its Millennium Development Goals for education including limited budget allocation, high dropout rates, poor teacher training, gender inequality and so on. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach: increasing funding to at least 4% of GDP, improving teacher training, modernizing the curriculum and enhancing access to education. By implementing these strategies, Pakistan can make substantial progress toward providing quality education for all its children, ultimately fostering social and economic development.